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Imagery analysis report

PRC Navy Spring Training Exercises, North Sea Fleet, 7 and 11 May 1979

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**PRC NAVY SPRING TRAINING EXERCISES
NORTH SEA FLEET, 7 AND 11 MAY 1979**

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1. [REDACTED] Chinese naval training exercises were observed in the southern Shandong (Shan-tung) and Liaodong (Liao-tung) local operating areas. The Shandong exercises involved elements of the North Sea Fleet's (NSF) Main Surface Forces, Submarine Force, Naval Coastal Defense Force, and Missile Attack Boat Force [REDACTED]. The Shandong exercises were observed in an area approximately 10 nautical miles (nm) east of Shuilingshan (Shui-ling-shan) Island (35-45 120-10E). The Liaodong exercise involved elements of the NSF Main Surface Force and possibly the Submarine Force. The exercise was observed 10 nm southeast of the Liaodong Peninsula (38-38N 121-20E).

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2. [REDACTED] east of Shuilingshan Island, three small craft, probably Huchuan hydrofoil torpedo boats (PTH), were observed regrouping approximately 1 nm astern of a naval tug (ATA) towing a semisubmerged target buoy (Figure 1). The hydrofoil torpedo boats had probably just completed a practice attack and were turning to prepare for another approach. A possible approach and attack exercise involving a Luta destroyer (DD), a Gordyy frigate (FF), and a surfaced R-class submarine (R-SS) was also observed in progress on 7 May. The Luta DD was observed in a port turn with its aft 130mm gun trained to starboard in the direction of the R-SS approximately 8,000 meters away. The Luta DD was possibly using the R-SS as a gunlaying target. If the Luta continued its turn, it would have come to a course parallel to but heading in the opposite direction of an ATA towing a target sled (YGTN) rigged as a gunfire target. The ATA was approximately 10,000 meters from the Luta. The proximity of the ATA to the Luta suggests that the Luta was engaged in a naval gunfire exercise. Even at moderate speeds

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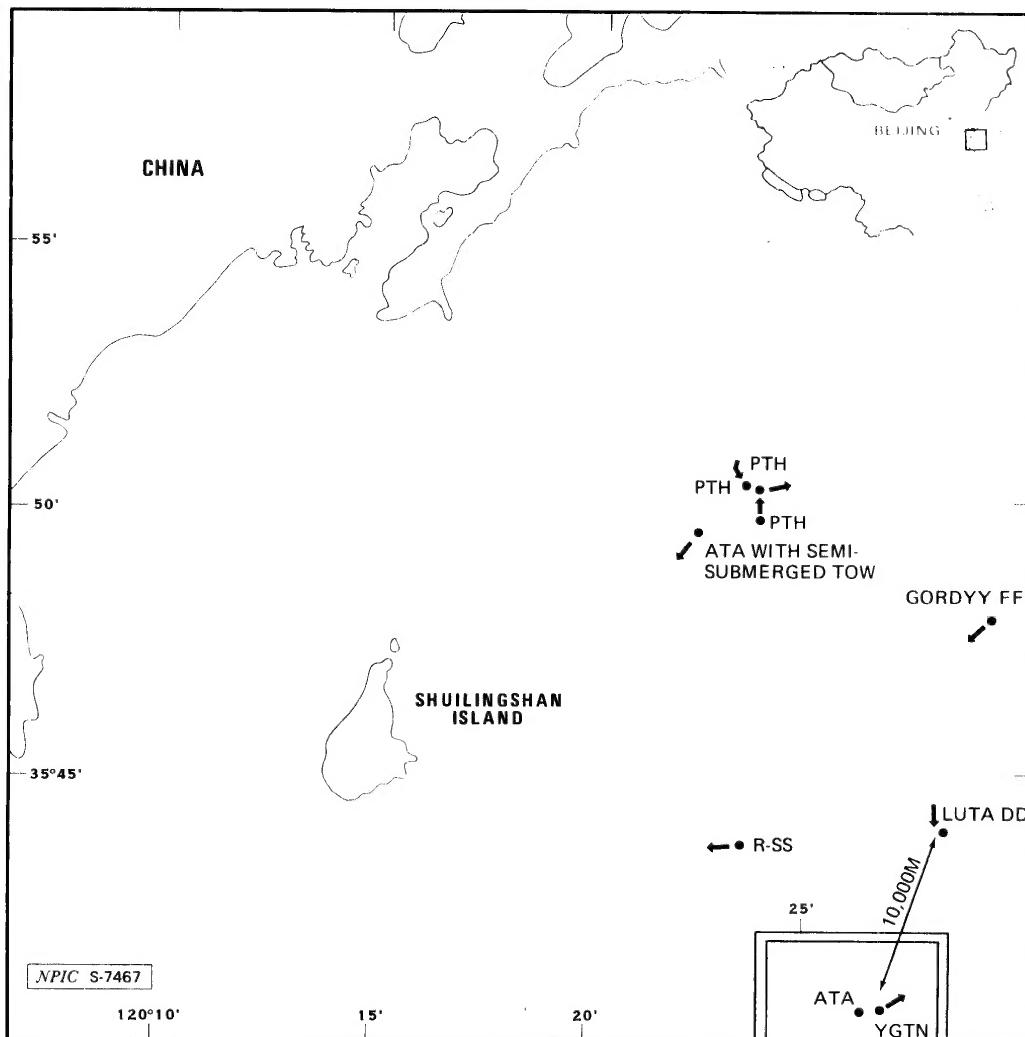


FIGURE 1. LOCATION OF MAY 7 ACTIVITY NEAR SHUILINGSHAN ISLAND, PRC

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the Luta and the ATA on opposite courses would provide a fairly high-speed target with continuously changing aspect for the destroyer gunners to fire on. A Gordyy FF, following in the Luta's wake approximately 4 nm astern, was not in a position to take the target under fire.

3. [redacted] also near Shuilingshan Island, a Hoku guided missile patrol boat (PTG) was observed retiring at high speed from a possible approach and attack exercise on a Gordyy FF 1 nm west of the northern tip of the island. Nearby, two Huchuan hydrofoil torpedo boats and an ATA pulling a submerged tow were involved in activity similar to that [redacted]. Concurrently, two surfaced R-SS and two Shanghai II patrol boats (PB) were engaged in a possible approach and attack exercise approximately 10 nm northeast of the island. The two Shanghai PBs were heading north followed by one of the R-SS 5,000 meters astern. The other R-SS was 1,000 meters astern and to port of the trailing Shanghai PBs. A cargo ship was steaming north approximately 3,000 meters astern of the leading patrol boat. The presence of the cargo ship in the midst of a naval exercise is unusual; however, it is possible that the area was not closed to shipping at the time the ship was passing through.

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4. [redacted] an antisubmarine warfare (ASW) exercise (Figure 3) was observed in progress in the Lyushun (Lu-shun) operating area 10 nm southeast of the Liaodong Peninsula. Five Hainan patrol craft (PC) were grouped around a disturbance in the water which may have been a buoy or a submarine near the surface. Two of the Hainans were dead-in-the-water (DIW) on opposite sides of the formation while the other three were on various courses around the disturbance. The disturbance was apparently the target of the exercise. Nearby but outside the immediate exercise area was another probable buoy. This buoy may be a navigational marker for the operating area or for the approaches to Lyuda Port. Also observed in the area was a snorkeling submarine (inset, Figure 3) on an easterly heading approximately 6,000 meters south of the exercise group.

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5. [redacted] The exercise appears to have been a simple ASW attack exercise. The directing ships were DIW to control the ASW maneuvers by the attacking ships. The disturbance in the water may have been either a buoy or a submarine. Whatever it was, it was in the center of the group of maneuvering vessels and may have been the reference point for the attack or the target itself. The snorkeling submarine observed to the south may have been involved in the exercise. If so, it was probably taking a new station for another phase of the exercise.

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6. [redacted] The activity [redacted] is a part of the annual spring training cycle. While such training evolutions are common during the warmer months, it is very unusual to observe them on imagery. The diversity of activity observed on these two days suggests that the PRC Navy is making a strong attempt to utilize its warm-weather training opportunities to the fullest extent possible.

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